

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS (NEO)  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS EFFECTS ON EFFICIENCY

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

15 February 2012

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## **Biography**

Lieutenant Colonel Jay Junkins is a U.S. Air Force aviator assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. He graduated from The Citadel in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, and the Air Force Institute of Technology in 2003 with a Masters of Science in Transportation Management. He earned his navigator wings in 1994 and has over 2,000 flying hours in the T-37, T-43, C-130E, and C-130H. He has served at the Air Staff and is a graduated operational squadron commander.

Applicable to this research paper, Colonel Junkins has served in the 609 AOC as the Chief of Mobility Operations (CMO) during Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM; the 612 AOC as the Deputy Air Mobility Division (AMD) Chief during Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, directing Haiti evacuation operations following the 2010 earthquake; the Joint Task Force 505's Chief of the Air Planning Cell during Operation PACIFIC PASSAGE, developing plans for Japan evacuation operations following the 2011 Tsunami; and the 607 AOC as the AMD Chief during numerous US and Republic of Korea exercises, directing the notional evacuation operations from the Korean peninsula.

## **Abstract**

U.S. global presence is growing at unprecedented rates. As of June 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated over 3.8 million U.S. citizens lived abroad with estimates of this overseas population blossoming to over five million today. At the same time, globalization is bringing the world closer, placing U.S. interests and citizens in locations ripe with uncertainty. This poses an ever-increasing challenge for the U.S. Government to preserve vigilance while maintaining the ability to swiftly react when danger presents itself to protect its citizens.

This paper takes a critical look at the way the U.S. Government conducts Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs). Through the identification of key decision-makers, the policies and processes government agencies implement, and the operational challenges they face, it is evident the process is currently not structured towards efficiency. By examining the barriers of interagency biases and lack of coordinated information sharing, it can be inferred historical success in NEOs is likely attributed to perseverance, ingenuity, and tenacity. This paper asserts through codified processes based on sound planning assumptions and the application of critical thinking, key decision-makers are provided the necessary framework and foundation to make comprehensive decisions with direct effect on the efficiency of future evacuation operations.

Through the examination of two recent examples, the 2006 Lebanon NEO and the 2011 Japan NEO planning, both successes and failures can be identified; substantiating many of the hurdles towards efficient evacuation operations identified throughout the paper. This critical analysis culminates with the recommendation of seven areas for improvement. Ranging from revamping of the State Department's Emergency Planning Handbook to the creation of an unclassified technological solution for information sharing. All to ensure the decision-making process is tuned to balance effectiveness and efficiency while mitigating risk to U.S. citizens.

## **Introduction**

U.S. global presence is growing at unprecedented rates. As of June 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated over 3.8 million U.S. citizens lived abroad with estimates of this overseas population blossoming to over five million today.<sup>1</sup> Events will arise which require the need to evacuate a portion of this population from their abroad locales to designated safe havens. These evacuations occur in response to various types of crises; to include civil unrest, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, conventional war, and disease outbreaks. They can range from the more common and relatively simple departures of U.S. Government employees and dependents on scheduled commercial flights to more rare, complex, and massive sealift and airlift of thousands of American citizens on U.S. Government-chartered and military ships and aircraft.<sup>2</sup>

### **Noncombatant Evacuation Operations**

Commonly referred to as Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs), these events require involvement by numerous agencies and are largely led by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) with direct support from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). NEOs have humanitarian, military, economic, diplomatic, and political implications frequently involving the swift insertion of a force, temporary occupation of an objective, and a planned withdrawal upon completion of the mission.<sup>3</sup> NEOs are characterized by uncertainty and may be directed without warning; therefore, plans should be developed for permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments.<sup>4</sup> The unique circumstances and characteristics of NEOs require significant interagency planning and coordination to ensure the rapid movement of citizens out of harms way. The level of uncertainty, timing, and resourcing can directly impact the stakeholders' decision-making and operational planning processes. Through the development of accurate DOS Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) and commensurate DOD supporting Operational Plans

(OPLANs), the decision-making process can be greatly enhanced. Furthermore, with the implementation of a more robust interagency training and education program, the U.S. Government will be able to provide an environment conducive to decisive action, enabling effective evacuation operations while maximizing efficiency.

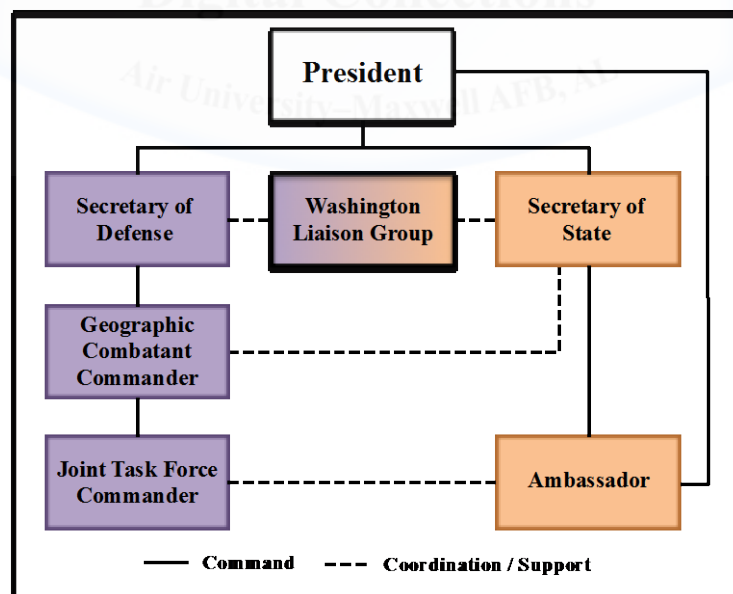
### **Key Stakeholders and Decision-Makers**

Within the *Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986*, the U.S. Secretary of State “shall develop and implement policies and programs to provide for the safe and efficient evacuation of U.S. Government personnel, dependents, and private U.S. citizens when their lives are endangered.”<sup>5</sup> The decision to evacuate citizens communicates the broad message the U.S. feels relative danger exists and there is a lack of clear confidence in the abilities of the host nation to either protect the population in danger or retain the norms of statehood.<sup>6</sup> Since this message will likely have significant diplomatic impacts, it is fitting the Secretary of State ultimately retains responsibility and authority over NEOs. However, the lynchpin to the evacuation decision-making process is the affected U.S. ambassador. Nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, an ambassador works directly for the Secretary of State as the senior U.S. Government official on the ground. As such, the embassy provides the critical assessments and recommendations leading up to the evacuation decision and throughout the departure process.

In the event the situation requires the support of the DOD, the Secretary of Defense “shall advise and assist the Secretary of State ... as appropriate, in planning for the protection, evacuation, and repatriation of U.S. citizens in overseas areas.”<sup>7</sup> As such, the Secretary of Defense has at thier disposal, six Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) with assigned combat forces, across all military services, charged with the responsibility for mission

accomplishment.<sup>8</sup> When the GCC presents forces, it does so in the form of a Joint Task Force (JTF). This organization is established to conduct military operations or support to a specific situation, such as evacuation operations.<sup>9</sup> Military doctrine outlines the necessity for the JTF to establish organizational structures, processes, and procedures to consider interagency perspectives and positions into its planning, execution, and assessment process.<sup>10</sup> The relationship and coordination between the supporting JTF and the affected ambassador is critical in the decision-making process.

The last organization, though not considered a “stakeholder,” focuses on facilitating the smooth flow of information between agencies and key players. This joint monitoring body, known as the Washington Liaison Group (WLG), is chaired by DOS, with representation from the DOD. “The WLG ensures coordination by appropriate U.S. Government agencies at the national level for all noncombatant emergency evacuation planning and implementation.



*Figure 1. Chain of Command<sup>11</sup> (DOD support to DOS)*

The WLG coordinates with the regional liaison group ensuring in-country support of the noncombatant emergency and evacuation plan.”<sup>12</sup> The WLG’s role integrates such agencies as

Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security to ensure all evacuees are met at the initial port of entry in the U.S., processed, and assisted in making onward travel arrangements. *Figure 1* depicts the doctrinal “chain of command” during evacuation operations.

### **Leading up to the Crisis**

DOS, acting on the advice of the ambassador, will determine when U.S. citizens and designated foreign nationals will be evacuated. Upon the Secretary of State’s approval to evacuate, the ambassador has the authority to implement the designated evacuation plan based on the crisis environment. Within the evacuation process, a tiered approach to designating categories of personnel for evacuation is normally followed in succession. The affected personnel are notified via the *Consular Warden System*; a structure which “provides a reliable way to reach U.S. citizens/non-citizen nationals in the event of an emergency, disaster, or threat, and to distribute other information of interest to the private U.S. community.”<sup>13</sup> By law, the Secretary of State is required to develop a mechanism whereby U.S. citizens can voluntarily request to be placed on a list in order to be contacted in the event of an evacuation.<sup>14</sup> Both in planning and in execution, the fact U.S. citizens are not required to provide information, but DOS is obligated to safeguard them, is a direct challenge to evacuation operations.

In many instances where the level of evacuation is relatively small and the environment is non-hostile, with functioning host nation infrastructure in place, DOS is able to accomplish evacuation operations utilizing commercially available resources. However, when the conditions of the evacuation are assessed to exceed the ability of DOS, coordination with DOD becomes essential. The process of evacuation normally flows in phases:<sup>15</sup>



1. Stand Fast: The environment has deteriorated and it is perceived that U.S. citizens are threatened, but an evacuation is either not required or is temporarily impossible.
2. Authorized Departure: Non-essential official personnel and their dependents are authorized to leave the country.
3. Ordered Departure: Non-essential official personnel and remaining dependents are ordered to depart the country.
4. Leave Commercial: Non-essential U.S. citizens may be told to leave by commercial transportation as soon as possible. If commercial transport is not available or adequate, the embassy may coordinate for increased commercial flights or contract flights.
5. Evacuation: The environment has deteriorated to the point that the safety of U.S. citizens is threatened; the ambassador directs the departure of all "Personnel Eligible for Evacuation Assistance."<sup>16</sup>

Throughout this continuum of evacuation, the coordination between DOS and DOD intensifies. From the moment the ambassador directs a "Stand Fast" order, the respective GCC is likely building the foundation for establishing a JTF and integrating liaisons within the embassy's staff. Doctrinally, the supporting JTF is formally stood-up after an "Ordered Departure" or "Leave Commercial" directive has been enacted.<sup>17</sup> At this point, the JTF will utilize the military resources at their disposal, to include U.S. Transportation Command assets, to support the growing evacuation requirement. Unfortunately, history has demonstrated interagency bonds are not built until after the environment approaches a critical state. Furthermore, a lack of standing

professionals, both within DOS and DOD, with pre-established linkages and exercised coordinated processes will likely lead to inefficient execution and decision-making.

### **Planning for Evacuation Operations**

The first step for successful evacuation operations is to have a coherent plan. This process begins with the Embassy staff via the creation of an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The DOS Emergency Planning Handbook (EPH), Volume 12, Foreign Affairs Handbook-1 (12 FAH-1) is a consolidated source of guidance for embassies to support their planning process in dealing with emergency situations.<sup>18</sup> As such, the EPH serves as the principal reference for preparing and revising EAPs. Realism and currency is crucial if the plan is to be effective and provide the foundation for subsequent military planning to support the evacuation. Standing EAPs provide valuable data points for GCC staffs to utilize during the planning and preparation of supporting contingency plans (CONPLAN).

In concept, deliberate planning relies heavily on assumptions prior to a crisis. The transition from deliberate planning to Crisis Action Planning and execution should be as seamless as possible. To accomplish this, military planners develop CONPLANs with fully documented Concept of Operations (CONOPS), detailing the assumptions, prioritized missions, and force requirements, deployment, and positioning required to support evacuation operations.<sup>19</sup> Crisis Action Planning is designed to provide vital decision-making information to senior leaders and facilitate information sharing among the stakeholders.<sup>20</sup>

### **Poor Assumptions lead to Faulty Planning**

Well-considered assumptions enable an effective and relevant plan. However, if DOS and DOD planners base their operations on erroneous assumptions, it is likely the evacuation will result in unintended consequences. The basis of these assumptions can include capability of

host nation infrastructure, availability of inter-modal transportation assets, or the size of the evacuating population and speed these individuals will flow to meet departing transportation. A 2007 Government Accountability Office (GAO) survey found embassies to perceive the EPH too generic and not user-friendly. While all embassies are required to review and update their EAPs annually, the GAO found nearly 40 percent of posts surveyed had not updated their EAP in over 18 months.<sup>21</sup> Without relevant and updated EAPs, the basis for planning and preparedness to during a crisis is likely to be impacted. Furthermore, embassies are required to produce estimates of private American citizens in country; however, more than three-quarters of the embassies surveyed stated their last estimate was “at best” only somewhat accurate. The embassy staffs find F-77 reports problematic due to their heavy reliance on volunteer self-reporting by in country citizens.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the use of such a broad requirement (F-77 reports) as the basis for the GCC’s CONPLAN often leads to successive faulty assumptions.<sup>23</sup> This only exacerbates the situation, driving to inefficient utilization of military resources during execution.

### **The Impact of the Environment**

The environment in which NEOs occur can drive significant stress on DOS and DOD assets. Poor or damaged infrastructure, host nation support, and hostilities can lead to an ever-increasing drain on resources and acceptance of risk. Doctrine attempts to define the operational environment in three distinct categories:<sup>24</sup>

1. Permissive Environment: No resistance to NEOs is expected, and thus the operation would require little or no assembly of combat forces in country.
2. Uncertain Environment: Host government forces do not have total effective control of their territory or population.

3. Hostile Environment: NEOs under conditions ranging from civil disorder, to terrorist action, or full-scale combat.

Further complicating the planning of NEOs is the pressure the U.S. has to support the evacuation of third country nationals, such as citizens of strong allies. In practice, the U.S. has supported governments requesting assistance in evacuating their citizens from countries in which a NEO has become necessary.<sup>25</sup>

NEOs are influenced by numerous challenges; unclear requirements, assumption-based planning, deficiencies in standing professionals with interagency experience, lack of current and relevant EAPs, and an uncertain evacuation environment. It is the task of DOS and DOD leadership to translate a NEO plan into reality. Their ability to master the decision-making process will be key to overcoming the numerous hurdles preventing swift and efficient evacuation operations.

### **The Decision-Making Process applied to Evacuation Operations**

The U.S. military has relied on the traditional military decision-making process (MDMP) as the mainstay of deliberate planning. The MDMP helps commanders understand the situation, develop courses of action (COAs), and decide on a COA to accomplish the mission as directed.<sup>26</sup> MDMP shapes decision-making leading up to evacuation operations. It is then supplemented in execution by the rapid decision-making and synchronization process (RDSP). While MDMP seeks the optimal solution, RDSP seeks a timely and effective solution within the concept of operations.<sup>27</sup> Utilizing RDSP lets leaders “avoid the time-consuming requirements of developing decision criteria and comparing courses of action (COAs).”<sup>28</sup> While evacuation variables continually change during execution, decision-makers can combine their experience

and intuition with situational awareness to quickly reach situational understanding.<sup>29</sup> It is the strength of the leadership, which can overcome misguided plans into effective execution.

Understanding the relationship between evacuation operations to the concept of crisis response and crisis management we are able to apply the widely researched concept of decision-making during crisis. These are decision-making situations characterized by time pressure, risk, uncertainty, multiple and changing goals, and multiple organizations.<sup>30</sup> As large-scale NEOs do not occur often, there is not a vast experience base for DOS and DOD to draw upon. A 2007 GAO Report highlighted “DOD conducts its own mock embassy evacuation training exercises. On an ad hoc basis, DOD asks State staff from Washington, D.C., to role-play as embassy staff during the exercises. However, this U.S.-based training is for DOD units tasked to carry out such operations and is not typically conducted with overseas posts.”<sup>31</sup> A recurring observation following these exercises is communication within and between teams and organizations should be improved.<sup>32</sup> To a large extent, the participating agencies come from widely different backgrounds, such as military versus Foreign Service, with different cultures and different information systems. Both DOS and DOD take pride in fostering an environment conducive to training personnel for crisis; it is all too common for professionals to train well within their agency, but work with other agencies for the first time during evacuation operations.<sup>33</sup> It is increasingly difficult to share information as the different agencies involved lack access to each other’s information systems, and they are not acquainted with each other’s informational needs.<sup>34</sup> The results of a 2006 emergency management exercise, focused on evaluating information sharing and the use of information systems during a crisis event, highlighted three enduring challenges:<sup>35</sup>

1. Lack of what decisions had been made during a meeting.

2. Lack of overall view of critical information requirements.
3. Lack of communication between the operational and planning teams.

The capture and flow of the “right” information is critical to the decision-making process. One must consider when dealing with multiple agencies, each will have its own processes and culture for “feeding” its decision-makers. Humans are wired to handle crisis situations by instinctively employing a pattern-matching or recognition-primed strategy, heavily influenced on past experiences or organizational norms.<sup>36</sup> This strategy may be adequate when dealing with a crisis confined to a single agency or relatively common in nature, but when dealing with multiple agencies, under complex environments and varying biases; it can propel a decision-maker toward a non-rational decision. An approach to overcome these challenges is the application of critical thinking techniques and the improvement of information sharing across agencies and teams.

### **Critical Thinking and Information Sharing**

Proficient decision-makers sometimes consciously employ a special technique which enables them to overcome subconscious biases, the critical thinking technique.<sup>37</sup> Application of critical thinking enables an individual to properly understand their interactions with their environment and with other people; therefore, they are foundational for decision-making activities.<sup>38</sup> Academia highlights several critical thinking processes, which are deemed foundational for decision-making. The following is a small sample of the recommended critical thinking processes having direct application to decision-making during evacuation operations:<sup>39</sup>

1. Continue to raise questions. (i.e. What do we know? How do we know?)
2. Have clear and explicit awareness of information gaps.
3. Discriminate between observation and inference.
4. Continue to probe for assumptions behind a line of reasoning.

These four fundamentals demonstrate the critical nature information has on the decision-making process, and the premise to never accept information blindly, but rather understand the strengths and weaknesses of information. Through the application of critical thinking techniques, the decision-maker is able to better understand the operating environment and mitigate the natural biases inherent with decision-making. However, when dealing across agencies, information sharing is necessary to effectively employ a critical thinking approach.

Information sharing between DOS and DOD was identified as having significant impact on efficient evacuation operations. “The lack of readily available, hands-on information needed to quickly arrange logistics could limit State and DOD’s ability to quickly coordinate and collaborate during a large-scale evacuation.”<sup>40</sup> In an attempt to address this information-sharing dilemma, President Bush issued the National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44), charging DOS with improving coordination, planning, and implementation of operations and ensuring that the U.S. can respond quickly and effectively to overseas crises. This led to the creation of the Interagency Management System (IMS). “The IMS serves to integrate planning and coordinate operations, ensuring harmonization of USG [U.S. Government] planning and operations within the context of a whole-of-government response.”<sup>41</sup> This concept was approved by the National Security Council in 2007 and has yet to be utilized in a crisis.<sup>42</sup> It is hopeful the implementation of such processes can increase interagency flow of information in NEO preparation and execution. In the end, the best approach to information sharing is to focus on complete transparency in sharing operational information, developing a shared situational awareness, and understanding the mission objectives.<sup>43</sup>

The following outlines recent NEO successes and failures. First, a strategic look at the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Lebanon in 2006 in response to growing hostilities between

Lebanon and Israel; followed by an analysis of the evacuation planning in response to a possible nuclear incident caused from a tsunami off the east coast of Japan in 2011. Both examples will highlight many of the concerns identified in this paper and will codify the need to address improvements to this “no fail” mission.

### **Executing Evacuation Operations in Response to the Lebanon War (2006)**

The U.S. began to evacuation operations on 17 July 2006 as rising hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel put in danger a large population of U.S. citizens within Lebanon. Two U.S. Marine Corps CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopters aided in the “Voluntary Departure” of 42 U.S. citizens from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut to the Royal Air Force (RAF) Base Akrotiri, Cyprus. Over the next week, the evacuations via U.S. military assets steadily increased and by 19 July, DOD was able charter the Orient Queen, a cruise ship able to transport nearly 1,000 evacuees on each ferry. The ship was escorted by a U.S. Navy Destroyer and arrived in Cyprus on the 20th. The evacuation of citizens continued via both air and sea lift utilizing military and charter assets. On July 26, the U.S. military performed its final scheduled evacuation from Lebanon. The military had evacuated almost 14,000 U.S. citizens from Lebanon. The U.S. Embassy in Beirut estimated the vast majority of U.S. citizens wishing to leave Lebanon had now been evacuated.<sup>44</sup> Though the operations on the surface may appear well executed, the challenges and lessons-learned highlighted numerous obstacles to overcome in order to transport citizens out of harms way. These issues are reoccurring themes, which must be addressed.

The U.S. Embassy in Lebanon reported they did not use the EPH or the established EAP leading up to the crisis. To compound the issue, the Beirut EAP assumed the use of commercial flights from the international airport to evacuate citizens from the country, but the airport was closed and overland travel was extremely risky.<sup>45</sup> This faulty assumption was only exacerbated



by the lack of accurate F-77 estimates. The crisis drove numerous “unregistered” U.S. private citizens to overwhelm Consular officials seeking the Embassy’s assistance in getting out of Lebanon.<sup>46</sup> Differences in institutional “languages” impeded State’s ability to communicate its needs and the urgency of the crisis to DOD. Furthermore, with State Consular and DOD officials operating on different data systems, critical elements, such as evacuating transportation schedules and passenger manifest data, was delayed, directly impeding the DOD’s chartering process.<sup>47</sup> Finally, the method by which the U.S. embassy communicated to the public was faulty and inefficient. The evacuees had a difficult time getting information on what to do or where to assemble.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, the EPH provided no specific guidance for addressing the public during a mass evacuation in a war zone; and the embassy struggled responding to the public because the staff did not have adequate training or access to a reliable, centralized source of information.<sup>49</sup>

It is apparent, the lack of prior planning or a relevant standing plan to deviate from, limited interagency rehearsals and training, and inaccurate assumptions drove to a very inefficient evacuation. The aspect of critical thinking and information sharing was unfortunately poorly applied. However, through the hard work and perseverance of both DOS and DOD personnel safely accomplished a huge feat of inefficiently evacuating over 14,000 citizens out of harms way.

### **Planning Evacuation Operations for Japan Tsunami (2011)**

On 11 March 2011, a 9.0 earthquake centered off the coast of Honshu<sup>50</sup> caused significant damage and triggered a tsunami along the eastern coast of Japan. On 12 March, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant experienced explosions and fires within four reactors.<sup>51</sup> Over the four days to follow, it was assessed the radiological threat to the surrounding area was

enough to trigger DOD to authorize the “voluntary assisted departure” of eligible family members (EFMs) stationed on Honshu to a safe haven within the United States; identified as Operation PACIFIC PASSAGE.<sup>52</sup> One key aspect, not found in past evacuation operations, was the ability to leverage existing U.S. military infrastructure, personnel and resources within Japan. Over the next ten days, Operation PACIFIC PASSAGE leveraged 25 U.S. Transportation Command-chartered flights to efficiently evacuate 7,452 EFMs and 409 pets to safe havens in Okinawa and western U.S. locations.<sup>53</sup> This was essentially a military operation transporting military families; not a true representation of the challenges inherent with a large-scale NEOs. However, during this same period a more encompassing evacuation plan was being developed.

The U.S. Embassy in Japan, the U.S. Pacific Command and their subordinate task force, JTF-505 were developing an evacuation operation larger than any in U.S. history. Affecting nearly 85,000 citizens within the “designated” fallout or danger zone of a Daiichi nuclear power plant. Over the next 30 days, the JTF and embassy worked intensely to develop a comprehensive plan overcoming many of the challenges identified in this paper. First, an existing evacuation CONPLAN or relevant EAP to build upon was non-existent. The JTF was “surprised to find there really was not a NEO plan that could be applied to [mainland] Japan. There were NEO plans, but they addressed other areas [support to Korea] ... so we really started from the ground up in developing the military assisted departure plan.”<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the challenge of codifying an accurate requirement was a foundation to build upon. The JTF and embassy were dealing with inaccurate F-77 reports; DOS’ method of accounting for the number of evacuates, fluctuated between 50,000 to 100,000 and eventually stabilized at 85,764.<sup>55</sup> This process took nearly a week to refine and provided fidelity to develop collection points with estimates to plan transportation against. Unfortunately, the lack of previous interagency training, between the

DOS and DOD, likely led to other misperceptions, directly hampering the flow of information. The JTF J-2 [Intelligence] shop reported, “a lot of the material that would have been very useful was coming out in the Japanese language ... the State Department handed us a great number of documents in Japanese and said ... you need to know this.”<sup>56</sup> This is an example of the confusion between agencies over the inherent skillsets in each organization. From the DOS perspective, language skills are a fundamental capability within the embassy, but within a JTF this is a capability, which must be requested. It may appear this evacuation operation was riddled with obstacles, but in reality there were “best practices” employed which mitigated many of these challenges.

As identified earlier in the paper, decision-making during crisis is significantly aided when the respective organizations have exercised similar events. These training events instill the ability to identify gaps and seams while avoiding traps during large-scale NEOs. Fortunately, for the JTF and the embassy, their proximity and support role during the Korean Peninsula mass evacuation exercises provided them invaluable experience. The JTF Commander stated “all those training events are not really training events, they are rehearsals, and I believe that is what set us up for success to carry this out.”<sup>57</sup> Additionally, it was noted DOS now trains their personnel based on established DOD and joint publications for the execution of NEOs, directly aiding the ability to communicate across agencies.<sup>58</sup> Clearly one of the “best practices,” which highlights the impact of information sharing across agencies, came from the interaction between the Ambassador and the JTF Commander. Both realized the necessity to share information and expertise were critical enablers and must be addressed across the spectrum, from the senior leader to the evacuation planners. As such, the JTF Commander moved himself and a small detachment forward from his headquarters in Okinawa to Tokyo. In short order, they were fully

integrated with U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) and the embassy within the initial days of the event.<sup>59</sup>

Likewise, the Ambassador sent the Consul General to integrate with the JTF Commander and his staff located in Tokyo. The Consul General's participation in nearly all video teleconferences with the JTF staff was instrumental to the decision-making process. Furthermore, planners and staff officers from both the DOS and the JTF were exchanged in order to bolster the embassy's planning team and the JTF's planning cell.<sup>60</sup> Finally, during the initial days, the ability to share information was challenged due to the employment of multiple websites, communications means, and collaboration tools. However, thru the utilization of the All Partners Access Network (APAN) the interagency team was able to provide interoperability and connectivity among the various participants over a common platform.<sup>61</sup> This allowed a single location for U.S. agencies, support entities, and affected U.S. citizens to share critical and timely information.

### **Recommendations**

In analyzing the 2006 evacuation from Lebanon and the planning efforts for evacuations from Japan in 2011, supplemented by the 2007 and 2008 GAO reports; several areas for improvement should be addressed in the preparation and execution of evacuation operations:

1. Embassies need to provide actionable feedback regarding the usability of the Emergency Planning Handbook (EPH) in support of evacuation operations.
2. State Department needs to implement a checks and balances process to ensure Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) are reviewed in accordance with DOS policy.
3. Embassies and GCCs need to take a more proactive stance in establishing evacuation baselines, exercise the interagency seams and information flow.
4. Defense Department needs to evaluate the creation of standing JTF with a focus on NEO; able to leverage expertise, increase evacuation response and velocity.

5. State Department needs to develop new methods to maintain current and accurate F-77 numbers; to facilitate a better allocated transportation needs.
6. Both DOS and DOD need to emphasize the application of critical thinking techniques and interagency information sharing in formal leadership training.
7. The U.S. Government needs to employ unclassified information technological solutions to maximize accessibility by interagency partners, supporting organizations, and citizens participating in NEOs.

Through the application of the seven recommendations above, the U.S. Government should mitigate challenges, enable an effective decision-making process and facilitate effective and efficient evacuation operations.

## **Conclusion**

Globalization is an inevitable phenomenon; while bringing the world closer, it places U.S. interests and citizens in locations ripe with uncertainty. This poses an increasing challenge for the U.S. Government to preserve vigilance while maintaining the ability to swiftly react when danger presents itself. Risk is not on the decline, “almost 45 percent of posts reported that the State Department has issued a travel warning for their country within the past five years ... and almost three-quarters of posts reported issuing a threat or security warning within the past five years.”<sup>62</sup> It is imperative the U.S. Government, through its departments of State and Defense, develop the necessary interagency relations, professional education and commensurate planning to ensure evacuation readiness is not at risk. If these aspects receive the necessary attention, the application of critical thinking and information sharing will ensure the decision-making process is tuned to balance effectiveness and efficiency while mitigating risk to U.S. citizens in harms way; ultimately providing timely life-saving transportation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. *Issues of Counting Americans Overseas in Future Censuses*. Report to Congress, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2001, 9.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. *GAO-08-23 State Department Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts can be Improved*. Report to Congressional Requesters, Washington, DC: GAO, 2007, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 3-68 *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*. Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 23 December 2010, ix.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>5</sup> “Diplomatic Security Act.” Title 22 *U.S. Code*, Pts. 4802, 2011 ed., b.

<sup>6</sup> Secretaries of State and Defense. *MOA between the Department of State and Defense on the Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Nationals and designated Other Persons from Threatend Areas Overseas*. Washington, DC, July 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management Policy). *DoD Directive 3025.14 Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Designated Aliens in Danger Areas Abroad*. Washington, 2003, 4.3.

<sup>8</sup> “Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act.” Title 10, *U.S. Code*, Sec. 111, 1986 ed., 164.

<sup>9</sup> *Joint Publication (JP) 3-33 Joint Task Force Headquarters*. Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007, I-1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi.

<sup>11</sup> *Joint Publication (JP) 3-68*, 2010, fig III-1.

<sup>12</sup> *DoD Directive 3025.14 Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Designated Aliens in Danger Areas Abroad*. Washington, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Department of State. “7 FAM-70 Warden System.” In *Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 7*. Washington, 2011, 71a.

<sup>14</sup> *Overseas Evacuations*. Title 22, *U.S. Code*, Sec. 4802.

<sup>15</sup> *Joint Publication (JP) 3-68*, 2010, IV-5.

<sup>16</sup> The ambassador cannot “order” private U.S. citizens abroad who are not directly affiliated with U.S. Government organizations.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, IV-6.

<sup>18</sup> Department of State. “12 FAH-1 Annex K Drawdown and Evacuation.” In *Foreign Affairs Handbook Volume 12*. Washington, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011, II-23 b.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, II-29 f.

<sup>21</sup> *GAO-08-23 State Department Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts can be Improved*. Washington, DC: GAO, 2007, 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Army. *Field Manual (FM) 5-0 The Operations Process*. Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2010, 2-62.

<sup>24</sup> *Joint Publication (JP) 3-68*, 2010, I-3 – I-4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, I-5.

<sup>26</sup> *Field Manual (FM) 5-0*, 2010, 2-44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-41.

- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 5-41.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5-42.
- <sup>30</sup> Schraagen, Jan Maarten, and Josine G. M. van de Ven. "Improving Decision Making in Crisis Response Through Critical Thinking Support." *Journal of Cognitive Engineering and Decision Making* (Human Factors and Ergonomics Society) 2, no. 4 (2008), 325.
- <sup>31</sup> GAO-08-23 *State Department Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts can be Improved*. 2007, 19.
- <sup>32</sup> "Improving Decision Making in Crisis Response Through Critical Thinking Support." 2008, 325.
- <sup>33</sup> GAO-08-23 *State Department Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts can be Improved*. 2007, 21.
- <sup>34</sup> "Improving Decision Making in Crisis Response Through Critical Thinking Support." 2008, 325.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 313-314.
- <sup>36</sup> Klein, Gary. *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998, 4.
- <sup>37</sup> "Improving Decision Making in Crisis Response Through Critical Thinking Support." 2008, 315.
- <sup>38</sup> Brewer, Jeffrey D. *Risk Perception & Strategic Decision Making: General Insights, a New Framework, and Specific Application to Electricity Generation Using Nuclear Energy*. Sandia Report, Albuquerque: Sandia National Laboratories, 2006, 17.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., 28.
- <sup>40</sup> GAO-08-23 *State Department Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts can be Improved*. 2007, 19.
- <sup>41</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command. *Handbook for Military Participation in the Interagency Management System for Reconstruction and Stabilization*. Norfolk, VA, 2010, i.
- <sup>42</sup> USAID. *What's the Story on Militarization*. November 2009.  
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- <sup>43</sup> *Joint Publication (JP) 3-68*, 2010, V-23.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., V-24.
- <sup>45</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. *GAO-07-893R State Department: The July 2006 Evacuation of American Citizens from Lebanon*. Report to Congressional Requesters, Washington: GAO, 2007, 7.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 7.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., 32.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., 8.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 8.
- <sup>50</sup> The largest island known as "mainland" Japan
- <sup>51</sup> U.S. Pacific Air Forces. *Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Response Lessons and Observations*. Lessons and Observations Report, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam: United States Pacific Air Forces, 2011, 1.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 1.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Marine Corps. *Evacuation Operations by Joint Task Force 505 Operation Pacific Passage, March-May 2011*. MCB Quantico: Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, 2011, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>62</sup> GAO-08-23 *State Department Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts can be Improved*. Washington, DC: GAO, 2007, 10.





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